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THE CLASSICAL JOURNAL

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Editorials

THE CLASSICAL ASSOCIATION OF THE MIDDLE WEST AND SOUTH

The movement which has resulted in the organization of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South was initiated by Professor W. G. Manly, of the University of Missouri. In a circular letter, written in November, 1904, Professor Manly pointed out the manifold advantages of an association that would bring together the classical teachers of the Middle West. His proposal was enthusiastically received, and after some months of correspondence and informal discussion the plan took definite shape. A circular, outlining the aims of the proposed association and calling a meeting in Chicago for May 5, 6, was issued by a number of representative men, and a general appeal was made to the classical teachers in the territory. The response was immediate and unprecedented. Within a few days more than six hundred sent in their names. The meeting was held, the work of organization completed, and on May 6, 1905, the Association entered upon its first year.

As Professor Manly stated in his letter, the feeling in favor of such an Association had long been growing. That in one mind at least the plan had been definitely worked out is shown by an article in the *Educational Review* VIII (1894), pp. 25-42. The writer is Professor Francis W. Kelsey, of the University of Michigan. Few men have a more catholic understanding of the special difficulties which beset the classical teacher than Professor Kelsey, and in this article, which is entitled "Latin in the High School," he sketches

the situation with a sure hand. After his analysis of prevailing conditions come two definite proposals: (1) the organization of classical conferences, the programmes of which should consist partly of pedagogical and partly of investigative papers; and (2) the foundation of a journal which should be devoted mainly to the interests of high-school teachers. The fact that Professor Kelsey, on the one hand, and Professor Manly and his associates, on the other, in independent study of the question, arrived at practically the same conclusions is strong evidence that those conclusions are sound.

The lists in the office of the *Journal* show that there are more than 7,000 classical teachers in the territory of the Association. That these thousands of workers should agree in all the articles of their educational creed is not for a moment to be expected. Nor is it to be desired. There are divers means of pedagogical salvation, and it is not the purpose of the new Association to convert the stimulus that comes from frank discussion into so much friction for the wearing away of individualism. Within certain limits every teacher does his best work when following the lines that he has himself laid down. But limits, none the less, exist, and it is manifest that such a presentation of the different aspects of classical study as is provided for in the plans for the programmes of the annual meetings can not fail to have a broadening and liberalizing effect.

Yet, however our interests may vary in detail, however different our methods of teaching may be, upon one thing we are all agreed—that the Greek and Latin classics are one of the best instruments for mental training; that they form an admirable introduction to the study of literature; that they contribute largely to the framing of the student's historical perspective; that translation from Greek and Latin into English, and from English into Greek and Latin, is an agency of unique efficiency for inducing accuracy and precision in thinking and speaking; in a word, that classical studies are, in the highest sense of the terms, practical and utilitarian. Nor could there be a more opportune time than the present for stating and making good our claim. For more than a decade the aims of classical study have been misunderstood and misrepresented. Latin and Greek courses have been forced within ever narrowing limits. The cry of "impractical" has been raised, and various substitutes for the

classics have been offered. In some cases the subjects substituted have been excellent in themselves, but have not been appropriate for secondary work; in others a crass pseudo-utilitarian philistinism has ruled the schools; while elsewhere the fads and fancies of misty pedagogical theorists have usurped the precious hours, which, under any rational system of education, would be given to the training of the mind. Children who have been sent to school to work have been taught to play. But there are signs that these things are passing. The cruder output of the schools under the new curriculum has not met with the approbation either of business men or of college professors. The high-school graduate is found to have mussed many subjects but to have mastered none, and there has been a reaction in favor of the stricter discipline of the classical courses. In more than one school Greek has come into its own. What has been done in these schools can be done in others, and the difficulty of the task will be enormously decreased if the efforts of individuals are supported by the influence of an Association which, its founders hope, will include every efficient teacher of the classics in the twenty-three central states.

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That the Association must have a journal in order to make it generally effective was evident from the start to those who had studied the situation. Inasmuch as attendance at the meetings can never include a large proportion of the classical teachers in so wide a territory, it is impossible for any organization to stimulate the interest of the teacher, to suggest to him higher ideals, or in any way to help him to make the teaching of Latin and Greek more effective, except through the medium of some publication. The nature of a journal which will carry out the aims of our Association must be determined in large measure by experience. But although no elaborate programme is desirable or possible, the general purpose of the *Classical Journal* can be very simply stated. It is to be a journal for the teacher, both the secondary-school man and the college professor. It will not neglect the practical problems which arise daily in the work of the classroom. Yet it is the belief of the editors that we teachers of the classics in every grade need something more and better than a knowledge of method. To keep in touch with that